

February 26, 1995

Secretary  
Federal Communications Commission  
Room 222  
1919 M Street NW  
Washington, DC 10554

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FCC MAIL ROOM

Re: RM - #8577 and Amendment to ET Docket 93-62

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To whom it may concern:

I am writing to you to express my concern and dismay about the petition before the FCC by the cellular telecommunication industry (CTIA) to "pre-empt state and local laws" in the siting of the 100,000 cellular towers planned for construction by the year 2000.

My family and I have recently experienced the iron hand of "Big Brother" when we were confronted with the prospect of an affordable housing development being constructed on a parcel of land that abutts our property. This project could literally increase the population in a square block area by upwards of 100 people, doubling it's current size. We had been informed by the chairperson of our Zoning Board Of Appeals, Carol Robbins, that we really didn't have too much to say about this project because of Massachusetts' "anti-snob zoning law", which states that all communities are mandated to reach 10% affordable housing. This allows a developer to go to the town's Zoning Board Of Appeals, avoiding all other boards, to apply for a "Comprehensive Permit". You know, "One Stop Shopping". A great big flaw with this concept is that one board hasn't got the expertise to address all the issues involved. Even though they receive input from other boards, many situations can arise that are beyond one board's competence. Consequently, this developer received the comprehensive permit and could feasibly connect this project to a sewer line that is in a decrepit and dilapidated condition and has backed raw sewerage into my basement on several occasions. Not to mention the fact that our town of Great Barrington, may not even need to reach a 10% limit, because the Massachusetts Institute for Social and Economic Research, an arm of the University of Massachusetts, forecast that Berkshire County's population will decline over the next 20 years.

Just 18 miles north of Great Barrington, the city of Pittsfield is plagued with vacant and derelict houses and Peter Lafayette, executive director of Berkshire Housing Services Inc. stated, (The Berkshire Eagle, February 14, 1995), "Fixing up all these empty buildings won't solve the problem. We have too many houses. Some must be torn down.", and "At the heart of the situation is a surplus of housing stock in the midst of a declining population." So why do we have to reach 10% affordable housing. Pittsfield did and look what's happening to them.

"As a general rule, I want to decentralize decision as much as I can," Speaker Gingrich says. However, he adds, "We have to look seriously at those areas where the national economy requires pre-emption (of local control)." Is it really the national economy Gingrich is concerned about or the pocketbooks of the FCC and telecommunications industry. If the FCC has received \$1.6 billion in bids for personal communication services licences since December is

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true, then it sounds to me like BUCKS is really the issue here. Is the sky really going to fall if some jerk tearing down the turnpike at 70 miles an hour can't talk on his cellular phone, or some putz has to answer his beeper call while sitting on a chair-lift, (as happened to me recently at our local ski area), to answer a question which could easily have been (by his own admission) answered the next day.

While the argument against towers usually centers on visual blight, health dangers can't be ruled out either. By your own definition you do not set standards or do biological research and don't have a grip on the health effects of wireless communication, therefore, why should communities give up their control on where 20,000 towers a year are placed!

We're just average citizens. We keep our noses clean and pay our taxes and when something like the development mentioned above or the placement of cellular towers is being taken out of our hands, we feel we are being rendered impotent. My husband and I have spent thousands of dollars in legal fees in order to protect the health of our family and the quality of our lives. Sometimes we feel as though we have the F. Lee Baileys, Shapiros of the legal world are operating the streamrollers. Sadly, we don't have the Juice's financial resources.

This industry is on the move and it will happen eventually. I'm not against cellular telecommunications in particular, but hope that communities get their heads together, and possibly make cluster farms and make good use of the towers that already exist. There has to be alternatives.

With the need for over 100,000 new communications towers, our beautiful Berkshire Hills topography will be blighted with the proliferation of towers. While I was on Baldwin Hill in Egremont this month, there was a herd of deer and wild turkeys out in a field grazing and plucking, the moon was rising and the sun setting, and I was taking photographs. It was so incredibly beautiful, but I had to position my camera lens slightly northward in order not to include the cellular tower near Catamount Ski Area in my scene. Wouldn't it be tragic if our ancestors have to look at old pictures in order to know what an unblemished and beautiful countryside looked like in the 20th century, and couldn't imagine it because of the thousands of towers placed all over the land.

Cellular telecommunications are here to stay. We all know this, but please, don't let progress be an excuse, and money the inspiration. Let it be done discriminately and with concern to health, safety, and aesthetics. It doesn't have to happen yesterday.

Respectfully submitted,



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c. C.J. Hodgkins